

# ECEAP News

September 2004

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Quarterly news from CTED's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

## The Classroom and So Much More

The Children's Services Unit staff anticipates another year of excellent services for ECEAP families in your community. You, our local ECEAP providers, do every day what research tells us is critical for the healthy development of children, families, and communities:

- Provide high quality early education and care.
- Offer preschool environments that benefit children into adulthood.
- Engage qualified staff in providing nurturing environments for learning.
- Focus on family strengths through confident interactions with families.
- Build trust with families as they work toward their goals and dreams.
- Honor and celebrate the unique cultural, racial, and linguistic identities of families in your program and the broader community.

We look forward to hearing about your successes, challenges, and wisdom in the exciting work you are doing this program year!

*Judy King*  
Family Support & Health Specialist

*"I color outside the lines because there's more room there."  
Dennis the Menace*

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## CSU Message Board

I call your attention to the ***Early Learning and Development Benchmarks***. This project by the Governor's office and Superintendent of Public Instruction is developing a set of voluntary benchmarks of what children should know and do, birth to school entry. November 8<sup>th</sup> marks the "unveiling" of the Benchmarks for public review. Look for an opportunity in your community or a conference you are attending to take a look at the benchmarks and give your feedback.

***Also, the November elections are fast approaching.*** If you haven't done so, please inform yourself about the upcoming initiatives, especially 884 and all the candidates up for election. And then make sure you vote!

I want to thank all of you for the hard, wonderful, challenging, exhausting and important work you do with children and families each day. I know that you may not feel appreciated for what you do every day. And while some wonderful, fun times are part of working in early childhood, so are some really tough, exhausting days. Take care of yourself the best you can, and know that you are making a unique contribution to the well-being of each child and family that you work with.

Best wishes,  
*Lynne Shanafelt*  
ECEAP Managing Director



## Health & Nutrition

What happens when local ECEAP and state agencies work together on health and nutrition? FEASTing and CHOWing, of course!

When programs and families FEAST, they participate in two fun family-focused sessions, including learning activities, hands-on activities, food demonstrations, and family-style meals. Activities support key messages about eating five or more fruits and vegetables each day, and encourage fun, daily physical activity for all family members.

**FEAST**  
Families  
Eating and  
Actively  
Sharing  
Together

**CHOW**  
Community  
Home-made  
Options for  
Wellness

CHOW supports the notion that families are resources to their own communities and draws heavily on empowerment and family support principles. Small teams of parents, in a side-by-side approach with staff, will design, produce and share community cookbooks that meet their cultural needs and tastes, as well as offer key nutrition and physical activity messages.

Children's Services Unit and local ECEAP health and nutrition staff are designing activities and curricula that can be easily implemented in programs throughout Washington. Curriculum training will be offered to programs in January in four regional clusters. Starting in February, twenty-two programs will offer FEAST or CHOW - or both!

ECEAP families are at 110% of federal poverty level and most qualify for food stamp assistance yet only 1/3 of ECEAP families are enrolled. DSHS offers outreach services to increase enrollment in the Basic Food Program. Local programs may want to work closely with Basic Food Outreach services to help families enroll for food stamp assistance.

CSU staff are delighted to offer these health and nutrition resources to local programs. For more information about any of these projects, please contact Shannon Blood, BFNEP Coordinator, at [shannonb@cted.wa.gov](mailto:shannonb@cted.wa.gov) or 360.725.2838.

*Did you know that Washington State is  
in the top 10 states experiencing food  
hunger and insecurity?*

## Q&A Corner

**Policy Memo: CSU-04-04**



*The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and ECEAP Enrollment*

**Q:** Do we take homeless 3-year-olds over eligible 4-year-olds?

**A:** According to ECEAP Standard 2.100, first priority must be given to 4-year-olds who are not eligible for kindergarten as of August 31 of that program year and are considered "at-risk". Second priority is given to 3-year-olds. There are childcare resources available for homeless Pre-K children. Information may be obtained at local shelters. In addition, ECEAP programs should attempt to link homeless families with their local school district liaison.

**Q:** If we are fully enrolled, homeless children are placed at the top of the waiting list. Do homeless 3-year-olds go to the top of the list?

**A:** Enrolling 3-year-olds based solely on their homeless status is not a requirement. Eligible 4-year-olds should take priority.

**Q:** If children who are homeless must be placed in class, does that mean we over-enroll?

**A:** ECEAP funding does not accommodate all 4-year-old children in the state, let alone all 3 and 4-year-olds. Therefore, over enrolling in ECEAP is not a requirement when homeless children are involved.

**Q:** Are parents living with other relatives, such as grandparents, considered homeless? If so, do we count the grandparent's income or just the parent's?

**A:** Persons sharing housing because they lost their housing, can't afford a home, or a similar reason are defined as homeless under the McKinney-Vento act. Their housing situation could change at any time, since they have no legal entitlement to the dwelling. In situations like this, only the income from the parent needs to be included when determining eligibility.

### Questions for Q&A Corner?

Send them to the ECEAP News Editor  
Jim Pivec at [jimp@cted.wa.gov](mailto:jimp@cted.wa.gov)

# Large Motor Activity - Outdoor Play



Preschool children need large motor activity to build strength, endurance, balance, and coordination. Active preschoolers form habits that can prevent obesity and learn skills for sports later in life. Outdoor exercise also provides fresh air, nature exploration, and the freedom to be loud and rambunctious. For some children, ECEAP may be their only chance for safe outdoor play away from the temptation of the TV.

If you are lucky enough to have an appealing playground with preschool-sized play structures, most children will know what to do. Staff can just open the door to let them out, supervise them for safety, and watch for opportunities to interact for fun and learning. Many sites, however, lack an appropriate play structure. Here are some creative, inexpensive ways to meet large motor needs in your real-life ECEAP environment.

## Children need to exercise large muscles every day.

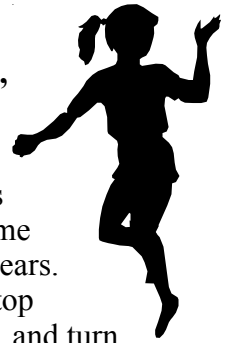
Running around in open space is a valid preschool activity! For variety, run with scarves, streamers, or bubbles. Organize games like Red Light/Green Light, non-competitive relays, tag, follow-the-leader, or parades. Redesign familiar games to keep children are moving the whole time. For example, tag games can have a quick “untag” option. You can take away a chair each round of Musical Chairs, but children have to share the remaining ones, so everyone keeps playing. Half of the children can run a relay at a time, instead of waiting in line.



To encourage muscle development, give children shovels, rakes, and brooms to move gravel, fill sand boxes, sweep sidewalks, or rake leaves. Start a “construction zone” with planks of wood, plastic crates, wooden boxes, PVC pipe with elbows, and/or cable spools (free from television or phone companies).

## Children need to practice basic movements like running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping.

Younger preschoolers may look awkward, before their arms and legs work smoothly together. They become more coordinated in the preschool years. They learn to run forward, then to stop quickly, maneuver around obstacles, and turn sharp corners. They jump, hop on one foot, then hop while traveling. They gallop, then skip. As they move, they learn to judge distances, heights, and their own abilities – which is better to learn in preschool than when they are first driving a car! This doesn’t require, just need a safe time and place to practice.



To help children learn to change directions while moving, build a maze of cardboard appliance boxes duct-taped together or set up a line of cones. An obstacle course provides practice moving over, under, and around. It can include hoops to jump through, blocks to jump over, dots to hop on, and a tunnel to climb through. A durable and inexpensive tunnel can be made by cutting the bottoms from plastic garbage cans and duct taping them together. Use plastic milk crates or a sturdy low table to give children practice jumping down. Organize jump rope or hopscotch games. Make up games like “jump to the fence like a rabbit and gallop back like a horse.” Play “The Olympics” with long jumps and low hurdles.

## Children need to throw, catch, and kick.

Children who learn ball skills develop coordination, strength, and are comfortable moving into grade school sports. They throw awkwardly at first using both hands in an underhand motion; they gradually obtain a smooth overhand motion. Practice throwing balls or beanbags into a clothes basket or wading pool, through a hoop, or over a rope. For

-Continued on page 4



# Cool Tools

## Age-Appropriate and Safe Playground Resources



The National Program for Playground Safety at the University of Iowa has some excellent tools. These resources would be great for training staff, and discussing why children under five should not use playground equipment designed for older children. We have one set of materials to loan, or you can purchase your own.

### **SAFE Playground Handbook** (112 pages) Cost: \$35

An easy-to-read book outlining important points concerning playground hazards, supervision, age-appropriate design, fall surfacing and equipment maintenance.

### **SAFE Playgrounds**

(Running time: 15 minutes) Cost: \$35.00  
An informative video providing an overview of the importance of supervision, age-appropriate design, falls to surfaces and equipment maintenance to playground safety. An excellent educational tool in discussing playground safety with professional and community groups.

### **Safe Surfaces**

(Running time: 10 minutes) Cost: \$35.00  
How do you select the proper safety surfacing for your playground? This informative video outlines criteria to ensure that surfaces under and around equipment are appropriate. Learn the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines and American Society for Testing and Materials standards in clear and understandable terms. A must for any group considering the acquisition or replacement of safe surfacing under and around playground equipment.

#### **Order at:**

<http://www.playgroundsafety.org>  
or 800.554.PLAY.

## Outdoor Play, cont.

developmental steps to teach throwing, see the article on Early Throwing Skills at <http://www.excel-abilities.com/pages/3/>

At first, it is hard to kick without stumbling. By the end of preschool, many children can kick a ball while running. Allow free kicking with small soccer or playground balls in open areas. Try a simplified, less competitive version of kick ball or make a game of kicking the ball to knock over targets.

### **Children need to practice balance.**

Children can begin by walking on a wide line taped or painted on the ground. When they can do that without stepping off, use a low balance beam, tires, or wide edges of a sandbox. By the end of preschool, most children walk forward and begin going backwards on a wide beam.

### **Children need to pedal and steer a tricycle.**

Preschool children first learn to pedal forward and can only steer around wide corners. They build the skill to maneuver around obstacles and make sharper turns. Finally, they can ride with speed and control. Cones, road signs, or an obstacle course can encourage skill development. Allow some tricycle speed and risk-taking on your playground, while wearing helmets.

### **Children need to climb.**

Preschoolers learn to climb a wide ladder, then move up and down stairs fluidly, and climb around obstacles. Climbing can be the hardest physical development need to meet if you don't have an appropriate climbing structure. Look around your environment for ways to use the large muscles to lift and lower the body using stairs, ramps, or ladders to lofts or slides. Is there a safe, easy-to-supervise park nearby with preschool-sized climbing structures? Can your Policy Council brainstorm other solutions?

### **Use your imagination.**

With some small purchases, you can create activities to keep children active and strong. For more preschool large motor activities, see the PE Central website at [http://www.pecentral.org/](http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/elementary/preschoolmenu.asp)



<http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/elementary/preschoolmenu.asp>

*Joyce Kilmer*

*Early Childhood Education Specialist*

Many ideas for this article are from *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Diane Trister Dodge, Laura Colker, and Cate Heroman. Published by Teaching Strategies, Inc.



# Connecting with Families

The early interactions we have with families help set the tone for partnership and communication throughout the year. Welcoming and affirming messages that staff share with parents and caregivers help shape their comfort and confidence as they begin the transition to the elementary school years.

Many parents say their positive experiences in ECEAP empower them to successfully navigate their life-long role as primary advocates for their children and families. Belief in the competency and strength of the families we serve helps families believe in their own competencies and strengths - and to learn new ones!



For some interesting research and ideas, check out: *Connecting with Parents in the Early Years*, <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/connecting.html> (funded by the Kellogg Foundation).

Judy King  
Family Support and Health Specialist

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